

HOUGH FAMILY LETTERS---1878

There is mention of a "New Year's Tree" party, a community gathering in Lafayette. Presents were handed out and there was a program.

A Literary Society was started in 1878 and members met every Saturday evening. They had debates, declamations, recitations and selected readings.

The Houghs were having financial troubles and there is mention of a "land suit" concerning their Lafayette property.

Hough Family letters have been typed from the original letters by Mrs. Helen Shank, a member of the Lafayette Historical Society.

Original letters are owned in 1971 by Robert Hough of Orinda, great grandson of Orlando Hough. Microfilm of the letters are in the historical files at St. Mary's College library.

Lafayette, Jan. 6, '78

Dear George

We received your letter a little over a week ago. I should have answered it before but I have been very buisy since I got it.

We are all well except Willie has a bad cold. We get along well. Mr. Allen has been trimming the vines & plowing the ground I am going to get some wheat ~~and~~ have it sowed on the side where the old house is, for the chickens to eat. We had a very nice time here New Years. There was a general turnout. I never saw so many at the church before; the seats were all filled and all of the standing room, Mr Pridy opened the exercises by proyer & Carrie repeated the Lords Prayer to close the exercises. Mr Simpson & Hadley delivered addresses Some recitations & declamations, Frank's & Willies peices took first rate. Franks was a "Dutch piece" and he spoke it nicely,--it made lots of fun they cheered all of the children and made a perfect uproar. My name was on the program to read some pieces but I thought the exercises were long enough without it. They had beautiful singing. some one put on a pretty white silk pocket handkerchief for me.

With much love to you

Mama

Carrie says she likes George & sends her love to you. Carrie says too she was not afraid a bit to speak her piece--the Lord's Prayer. She was going to print some to send to you but I have not time tonight to look after it. Grandpa Brown

killed a pig for us we salted it in a sugar barrel it is
first rate meat

E

Lafayette. Jan. 6. 1878

Dear Brother George:

I received your letter a week ago last friday and was very glad to hear from you. we are all well at the present, and I hope these few lines will find you the same. my foot and my leg swell up very high I think it is poisen-oak. what did you get christmas? I got 2 apples and some peanuts and candy. I went two sunday school to day and got a sunday school card and a sundy school paper. Gip and I dug out a large cotten-tail up on the hill the other day and we eat it. Grandpa Brown killed a pig for us the other day. Genea Berg and Mr. A. Allen are plowing Mr. Allen trims the vines and I drive while Genea plows, the bill all came to \$7.25 the ground is very dry and hard. I have fixed my house up up on the hill. I traded my little wagon off for Willies ax there was not any shafts on the wagon because Christmas Genea Berg, Willie Thomson, Clarence Allen Willie and I were rideing down the hill with two sleds and two little wagons and when we got very near the barn the shafts broke and let Genea Berg down on the ground. We are milking Blina yet and she gives about a half of a tea cup full. You asked me in your letter who the Subscribers were I got for The Home. I will tell you who they were they were Mary Marsh, who paid 60 cents, Nettie Wilson who paid 35 cents, Laforest Isaac, who paid 35 cents, Frank Hough who paid 35 cents, William Thompson who paid 60 cents. I am agoing to get for my premium the pictures came two wweeks ago but my premium did not come I do not know when it will come. We had a New Years tree

here new years evening and I got a little bag with some pop-corn candy two walnuts and a pea-nut or two and about 3 yards of calico. Mrs Rutherford put it on for me. Willie got about the same as I did except he got a little book called life and death of Jennie wren Carrie got a little bag with some pop-corn and some candy and peanuts and a little thing to put pins on and a little jacket for her doll. Mary Stan-age got 20 presents. I have got a sack and a half of walnuts this year and Willie got 2 sacks. Blina has got a little life in her when Brin as we call the largest pup tried to catch her by the tail she kicked him over. the pupie is getting along very well I drouned the yellow pup and the black and white cat. Brin will not catch squirrels yet but he will catch mice. yesterday I found a barrel to a rifel but it had some dirt and some wheat. good night. From, Frank H.

Lafayette Jan. 22. 1878

Dear Brother George,

I received your letter today and was very glad to hear from you. we are all well at the present and I hope these few lines will find you the same. Willie and I went a fishing about a month ago and did not catch any thing We got a ride on the stage the stage driver lost his blanket and Willie found it and he gave us a ride. Willie and I went a fishing last friday and did not catch any thing only the rain it wet me through. We seen the stage but did not get a ride. Willie got some black bery vines and both of us got some dried pees we found them in the road. it is a raining now the creek is very high. there is not any suckers in the creek but I think there will be some. My premium for The Home was a pen-knife it has not come yet. I wrote for it Jan 15th. Willie Thomson went down two Mrs. Huchasons with Willie and Willie Thomson got 2 iron wheels and gave then to Willie and Willie and I made a wagon we rode down hill on it and it threw us off more times than we rode down in safty. We are not milking blina. I am over in decimels in the arithmetic. I found that rifel barrel where the old pars-nage used to be. school is not out yet. I do not know how much that pig did cost that we got of Mr. Brown

good night From your brother Frank Hough

Lafayette. Jan. 22, 1878.

Dear George

I received your letter today, we are all very glad to hear from you, always. We are all quite well.

For a week or two we have had a plenty of rain, it has rained very hard today. Every one seems to be glad to see the rain come. The school has not closed yet. I think it will this week.

You wanted to know if they had any dinner to the "Christmas Tree"? "New Years Tree" you mean. We did not. I did not feel able to pay any thing for getting up the Tree--well: in fact they did not ask me for any thing. They held a meeting & appointed a committee of three to select the exercises. Mr Rutherford Mr Stanage & me. Mrs. R and Mary Stanage collected the money to get the things to put on the tree. Mr Simpson was President. I was not to their meeting they came and invited me to take a part in it. I have sold two of my turkeys for \$5.00. Mrs Stanage bought one of us that we raised, it weighed 16 3/4 lbs. I have taken in nine dollars since you went away.

I think it is shameful, that we can not have a cow here. A few less cows up there well fed would be more profitable.

Mama

There was a meeting to our house a week ago last sunday evening. there was more here than we had seats for. Willie Bradley took the lead and done first rate well. We all send our love to you. Carrie has been trying to print some to send to you, she printed your name & hers. M--

Lafayette. Feb. 10./'78

Dear George,

We received your letter last Thursday, was very glad to hear from you.

It has been very rainy since it commenced to rain, the stages run yet, but it is very muddy. Frank and Willie have just come from Sunday School, they are both well.

Carrie has been very sick for the past week, she is very much better today. I don't know what was the matter of her, I doctored her for worms, and a cold and she is getting better, this damp weather is very unhealthy.

Frank is milking Andy Allen's cow, and gets one half of the milk, which is a little more than a pint a day, we are very glad to get, even this small quantity.

The grass is growing very fast. A man came here last week from the ranch, making some complaint about horses on the ranch, that he wanted us should take away, or he would turn them out in the road, and also a man from Charlises some time ago, came here, and said there was some horses running over there, that troubled them very much.

Mrs. Madden has found her hieffer that she lost about the time that we lost ours. Frank Hammett found it over to Watson's ranch in Moraga Valley, her old cow died a short time ago, it got hurt so Mrs. Hammett told me.

Clara Thompson has got a new Organ, it is said to be a very nice one. Lizzie Hodge is teaching her how to play on it.

Three weeks ago last evening there commenced a Literary Society here they hold their meetings every Saturday evening. Mr.

Simpson is President & Mrs. Rutherford is Vice President, the exercises are debates, declamations, recitations, select readings etc. etc. I have not attended any of their meetings but I have heard that they were very interesting.

None join, unless invited. Men and boys pay twenty five cents, women nothing, whatever the society asks you to do you are required to do, most of the people about here have joined it especially the younger ones.

Mrs. Rutherford has sent me some nice butter twice of late.

The frost injured my geraniums a good deal.

Grandma Hodge is quite sick. Mrs. R. and Mary Stanage is not so "good friends" as they use to be. The Adsents have all gone to Oakland today, I think to hear Mrs. White or Healy, preach. I will send your Father the letter that Stephens sent to him here. They keep sending the "Signs of the times" yet.

Our hens does not lay at all lately, sometimes I have a mind to sell them all off, and commence anew with another kind. Mrs. Hammitt's hens have laid all winter. I sold a few dozen eggs soon after you went away. Frank and Willie caught six rabbits, with Jips help, lately. It was "quarterly meeting" at Walnut Creek last Saturday and Sunday Chess. R. came here to ask me to go with them,--I did not go on account of Carri's being sick. I am always very glad to hear from you. M.

I suppose Buckley has written to your father about the "land suit" so it will not be necessary for me to write any thing. Willie was to Mrs. Ghomans, (or rather Hutchinsons) yesterday & said Buckley was there to see about it, he does not call here, but I heard from Mr Hammett something about the suit. Yours aff. Mother

Lafayette March 6, 1878.

Dear Papa. I received your letter today. We are all well at the present. Frank and I have caught 19 rabbits since you went away. There was a panarama at the school house a short tim ago Frank and I got in for distributing some papers for them. It has been raining all day. Mr Warren Brown got two little donkeys about as large as a goat. Mr. E.G. White preached at the church last sunday night there was a good many there. Mamas turkey is laying now. Frank and I got 5 rabbits alive we made a pen they got along very well a few days but one night some thing killed 3 and the other 2 died. Mama gets two hens eggs. Excuse bad writing
yours truly

Willie Hough.

Lafayette. March 6.

Dear Brother George

I received your letter today and was very glad to head from you. We are all very well at the present and I hope these few lines will find you the same. We have caught 19 Rabbits Brin found 2 in squirrel holes and he dug one of them out and Gip and I dug the other one out and the last one we kept alive and the next day she had young ones but she got hurt and died. and we had four more large ones qne something got in the cage and killed all but one I think it was the rats. Florence Rose an Lecta Rose and their grand father are dead Florence and Lecta died with the diptheria and their grandfather died with the Rhutism. There was a panarama over to the school house Willie and I distributed some papers and they let us in free I distributed four and Willie ditributed eight there was some funy pictures It has been raining very hard and it is a raining now. Willie and I found a fish spear but it was Leonard Wilson. Warren Brown has got 2 little donkies if you punch then they will kick up they are about as large as goats. Bill Darby has lost 2 children and Jim Darby has lost one they died with the diphtheria. Good night

From your brother Frank Hough

N.B. I dont know whether you can read this or not for the are not spelt correctly for I wrote in the other room while mama wrot out in the kitchen. Carrie said she was agoing to feed her gobbler bones to make him lay. our turkey hen has com-
menced to lay and so has your 2 creepers.

Lafayette, March 6, 1878

Dear George,

I received your letter today, was very glad to hear from you.

We are all well. Carrie has got well.

We are having very hard rains no serious harm done except a few bridges and some fences washed out, and travel stopped mostly, the stages runs most of the time.

Mrs. E. G. White from Oakland preached here at the Church last sunday evening, it was so rainy, I did not go, but the boys went.

We got out of wood awhile ago, and A. Allen & I. Allen cut off the top to our "oak tree". it looks rather forlorn but they say it will grow out again much better shape than before. They were going to make a "bee" and cut it up for us, but I did not want them to, the boys have got it mostly cut up.

I give Andy Allen the deer hide Petter gave me, for what he has done for us.

Grandpa Brown has been very good to us, he is shurely a good old man.

James Daley has lost one child, and William Daley two children with diphtheria, of late.

The literary society here is said to be very interesting, and well attended. I have not been out any where lately it is so wet and muddy.

Our hens just commence to lay some. we have not got any eggs

this winter.

The rumor is that Mr. Simpson has gone away to be married, & will soon return with his bride and take up his abode in Shreves house. They are papering, white washing and repairing the house. I got a card from Carrie, (my sister) a few days ago, stating that Mother was very sick with lung fever, I feel very anxious about her, she has been so feeble for a long time. My poor mother, she wants to see me so much, and I would dearly love to see her again, but it may never be in this world.

We have had some very hard winds here, how is it up to the Springs? does the wind ever blow hard there.

Does the creek ever rise to the top of the bank below the house? The hard rains must be very bad for Allen's Springs. It must be very disagreeable living up there in the winter,-- it is bad enough here, but I think if any of us should die we could get out to get them a coffin, if we could raise money enough to pay for it.

Hens and chickens are very high now, and eggs are low. I sold two small hens a few days ago for a dollar and a quarter. You must write as often and as much, as you can. I am very glad to hear from you. Every thing you write interests us. Carrie sends her love to you, and we all do.

Yours affectionately

Mamma

Oakland June 21st

Dear Friend--

I reached home safe and sound-and would have written before but have been quite busy Mother has not been well and of course I have to take her place about the house. Remember me to the boys and Carrie--and tell them I would like to hear from them--You must excuse a Postal this time but next time I will try and do better--It is quite windy here today--I have written Mrs Brach that I must ~~come~~ out on the 30th of June--I have Mother's permission--I want to go oh so much--If George comes in tell him to call--with kindest regards--

I remain Eva Randlet

Hough's Springs June 16, 1878

Dear George-

I have received one letter from you since you left here I was glad to hear from you. We are all well here. Your father got here the next Thursday afternoon, after leaving home. He has got the hay all in the barn. John King helped him, He is now helping King get his. King has sold his place to his father. His father and mother are on the place. A week ago yesterday, they took the baby down there, She is well and grows nicely. She holds things in her hands and plays. She will not suck the bottle anymore, but drinks from a cup. It seemed she did not like the taste of the rubber. I think it made her sick to her stomach. There is no one in the cabins yet. While your father was gone I had a woman and three children here eight days--her husband went to look for a job, got it, then sent for her. He was Mr Alexanders cook. They have gone to Chico. Last week we had a man and his wife here from Bartlett's--the man came down for a hunt--he killed one deer and some pigeons, He gave them all to us He hunts for amusement, not for gain, all he wants of what he kills is what they want to eat. Yesterday he went down to Indian Valley, stoped here to supper last night. He got quite a lot of birds--he gave me six. I got four bits for his supper. They did not come up for their health, but for recreation. There is not as many people at any of the springs as there usually is at this season of the year. Almost every day there is somebody here. I have got two extra meals today. This morning I went

out back of the barn and picked a tin cup full of blackberries. The other day I got enough for a pie. Day before yesterday I went over to the grain field, and I killed a very large rattle snake--he had twelve rattles. I set the trap soon after you left, and caught a coon. I set it up the brook, on the right hand side of the road, at this end of the brush fence. I have got forty chickens, and more hens siting. They lay out in the bushes, and many of them get broken up. Your colt is doing nicely, so is Jennie and Ian. All the cows have got calves. It is a good thing that your father took little Whitey, for she is much better cow for butter than the other one. I am glad you have got a good cow.

June 18 I have been washing today and baking. I baked blackberry, apple and custard pies, and cleaned the lower cabin. It was hard work to carry so much water after doing a large washing. I had to get an extra dinner too. My hens are laying nicely--yesterday I got 28 eggs, I found a nest with 12 eggs,--today I got 17. There was an old man murdered near Horse Mountain, a few weeks ago, by the name of Greer. Tip, the Indian, has been arrested and is in jail, as the murderer. It is late and I am very tired, so I will bid you good night. Write soon, and as often as you can.

Grandma to George

Your father has not got done work at King's yet, but expects to tomorrow

LAFAYETTE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P. O. BOX 133
LAFAYETTE, CA 94549